(c) the reasons as to why NALCO increased the price of aluminium ingot?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir. (b) The last increase was with effect from 1st February, 2000.

(c) NALCO has increased the price of Aluminium Ingots keeping in view the international price, domestic market scenario, the inventory position and the anticipated production during the financial year.

Shukla Commission report on development of coal sector in NE

2220. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient recommendations of the Shukla Commission on development of the Coal sector in the North-East in terms of PM's special package; and

(b) the action taken target fixed and achievement made so far in implementing each of the recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) The recommendations of the Shukla Commission on development of the Coal Sector in the North East in terms of PM's special package are as under:—

(i) Steps should be taken to explore external market opportunities for North-East coal and an infrastructure plan, including roads and ropeways developed to exploit emerging opportunities.

(ii) Coal India should be charged with rehabilitating the private mining industry in Meghalaya in consultation with the State Government and private landowners.

(b) Action taken in this regard is as follows:

(i) Because of difficult geo-mining conditions and the geographical locations of the mines, the cost of coal production as well as the freight charges in the North East are very high. High sulphur content of the North East coal is another inhibiting factor. As a result of all these, this coal gets out priced in Bangladesh and other markets.

(ii) Global Tenders were floated by CIL in the years 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 for exporting coal to external markets. No bids were received for export to Bangladesh. Only one bid for export to Nepal was received and this was rejected as the bid price was very low and not acceptable.

(iii) Possiblity of export of North East coal to Myanmar was also explored through the Indian Embassy there. However, the Indian Embassy informed that there is no prospect for marketing of thermal coal in Myanmar.

(iv) A Regional Institute of Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited has been established at Tura, Meghalaya. This institute is meant to render services for re-construction and rehabilitation of the private mining industries in Meghalaya, keeping in view the need for conservation and safety.

(v) A meeting was convened on 13.09.1997 at Shillong with the representatives of Government of Meghalaya. Government of Meghalaya was of the view that it would be very difficult to take any action for stoppage of unscientific mining on account of the prevailing land rights in Meghalaya.

Views of GSI specialists on Earthquake in Darjeeling

2221. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that earthquake specialists of Geological Survey of India have expressed that there might be disastrous earthquake in Darjeeling at any moment;

(b) whether it is also a fact that they have suggested some measures to avoid heavy losses; and

(c) if so, the action proposed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) A few micro-earthquake (MEQ) surveys have been carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) in the Darjeeling/Sikkim areas of the Eastern Himalaya in the recent years